

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 ACDA-05 /075 W

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R 101455Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4049

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

S E C R E T ALGIERS 0652

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, AG

SUBJECT: ALGERIAN OPPOSITION GROUP

1. SUMMARY: RESPECTABLE ALGERIAN OPPOSITION GROUP APPEARS TO HAVE SURFACED MARCH 9 AND THEN SUNK. ITS VERY SURFACING, HOWEVER, SUGGESTS WIDER DEGREE OF INTERNAL DISAFFECTION THAN WE HAVE HERETOFORE BELIEVED. END SUMMARY.

2. RELIABLE FRIENDLY AMBASSADOR PROVIDED US WITH FOLLOWING REPORT ON ALGERIAN OPPOSITION GROUP.

3. EVENING MARCH 9 BEN YOUSSEF BEN KHEDDA, LONG-TIME ALGERIAN POLITICAL FIGURE WITH EXCELLENT REVOLUTIONARY/ NATIONALIST CREDENTIALS, CALLED ON REPRESENTATIVES OF FOREIGN PRESS AGENCIES IN ALGERIA. VISIBLY SHAKING, BEN KHEDDA GAVE TO EACH COPY OF "APPEAL TO ALGERIAN PEOPLE", ASKING THAT THEY INSURE APPEAL DISTRIBUTED.

4. APPEAL, OF WHICH AMBASSADOR PROVIDED TEXT, HIGHLIGHTS FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. URGES END TO CURRENT CONFLICT WITH MOROCCO WHICH, BECAUSE OF DANGER OF DEVELOPING INTO GREAT-POWER CONFLICT,

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ENDANGERS PRINCIPLE OF NON-ALIGNMENT, KEY TO ALGERIAN

FOREIGN POLICY;

B. CONDEMNS CURRENT "CULT OF PERSONALITY", "PERSONAL POWER", AND "TOTALITARIAN SYSTEM";

C. CALLS FOR CREATION OF ALGERIAN STATE BY ELECTION BY UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE OF CONSTITUENT AND SOVEREIGN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY;

D. CALLS FOR UNITED, FRATERNAL, ISLAMIC MAGHREB.

5. APPEALS SIGNED BY BEN KHEDDA, LISTED AS FORMER PRESIDENT OF PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ALGERIAN REPUBLIC; FERHAT ABBAS, LISTED AS FORMER PRESIDENT OF PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ALGERIAN REPUBLIC; HOCINE LAHOUEL, LISTED AS FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF ALGERIAN PEOPLE'S PARTY AND FORMER FLN REPRESENTATIVE ABROAD; AND CHEIKH MOHAMED KHEIREDDINE, LISTED AS FORMER MEMBER OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OF ALGERIAN REVOLUTION.

6. ALGERIAN SURETE ARRESTED BEN KHEDDA ONE HALF HOUR AFTER HIS CALL ON FOREIGN PRESS REPS. SURETE REPRESENTATIVES LATER IN EVENING CALLED ON REPS IN TURN TO TSAY THAT ON SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS OF SURETE HEAD, AHMED DRAIA, REPS WERE NOT TO SEND OUT ANY REPORT ON MEETING OR COPIES OF APPEAL. FOLLOWING MORNING SURETE REPS CAME BACK TO COLLECT DOCUMENT BEN KHEDDA HAD LEFT.

7. AMBASSADOR SAID THAT APPEAL HAD BEEN ACCOMPANIED BY CALLING CARDS OF BEN KHEDDA, KHEIREDDINE AND LAHOUEL. IMMEDIATELY AFTER BEN KHEDDA LEFT, ONE PRESS REP CALLED FERHAT ABBAS TO ASK IF HE INDEED BACKING NEW MOVEMENT; ABBAS NOT THERE BUT WIFE RESPONDED, AS ONE MIGHT EXPECT IN THIS TAP-RIDDEN SOCIETY, THAT HE HAD NOT PARTICIPAED IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY FOR TWO YEARS.

8. AMBASSADOR SPECULATED THAT SURETE OBVIOUSLY ON TRAIL OF OTHER THREE SIGNATORIES OF APPEAL, IF THEY NOT ALREADY IN CUSTODY. HE SAID PRESS REPS DO NOT
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PLAN TO SURFACE STORY AS IT WOULD MARK END THEIR OFFICES HERE.

9. COMMENT: HITHERTO WE HAVE BELIEVED OPPOSITION TO BOUMEDIENE CONSISTED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY OF EXILES FUNDED BY OAS REMNANTS OR BY WHOMEVER HAPPENED TO BE IRRITATED AT ALGERIANS AT TIME; EL MOUDJAHID BOMBING INCIDENT ON JANUARY 3 APPEARED TO US TO

REPRESENT NO MORE THAN SPASM OF PIED NOIR ACTIVITY,
ALTHOUGH WE REMARKED AT TIME THAT EXTENT OF BOMBINGS
PALNNED INDICATED EXPECTATION OF SOME LOCAL SUPPORT.

10. EMERGENCE, EVEN IF VERY BRIEF, OF OPPOSITION GROUP
TO BOUMEDIENE WHICH CONSISTS OF SUCH FIGURES WITH
RESPECTED PASTS INTRODUCES NEW ELEMENT. BEN KHEDDA'S
SUICIDAL EFFORT TO CONTACT FOREIGN PRESS REPS AND
VERY EMERGENCE OF GROUP AT THIS TIME SUGGESTS
DEGREE OF DESPERATION ON PART OF SOME ALGERIANS ABOUT
CURRENT LEADERSHIP AND POSSIBLE EXPECTATION THAT
SUCH DESPERATION WOULD FIND ECHO AMONG WIDER AUDIENCE.
BOUMEDIENE'S BASE OF SUPPORT EVIDENTLY NOT QUITE AS
SOLID AS HE WOULD HAVE US BELIEVE. IT WOULD BE
PREMATURE TO CONCLUDE THAT HE IS IN TROUBLE DOMESTICALLY,
BUT WE AND HE WILL BE WATCHING.PARKER

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